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THE STORY OF MR. AND MRS. CASS COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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RESERVE  
Mr. and Mrs. Cass County and son, James David (2 $\frac{1}{2}$  years of age) live on a 240-acre farm in the west part of Cass County, Nebr. The Casses own 160 acres, including improvements, and they rent the other 80. They practice diversified farming. Growing conditions have not been so favorable in the west half of the county (until last year) as in the east half, largely owing to amount of rainfall. The Casses do not have the advantages of modern conveniences, but they do have a gas motor for their washing machine, a gasoline iron, and an electric refrigerator.

Mrs. Cass County is responsible for the garden, chickens, carrying in the fuel, and the past year has assumed the major part of the chores and milking. She does her own laundry, much of the family sewing, and most of the baking. They have had domestic help only during sickness, and the amount of paid or family help with housework is no different from what it was formerly. The only house responsibility assumed by Mr. Cass County is to empty the garbage and waste liquids, but he does all his farm work.

Mrs. Cass County saves time and energy by brushing vegetables well and boiling them in their jackets. She peels such vegetables as potatoes, but others, like carrots, don't need peeling. Another practice is to do the washing only once every 2 weeks, which saves handling water, saves soap, and doesn't take much longer to do than 1 week's wash. Soaking one tub of clothes about 15 minutes, then to machine and rinse, speeds up the job. Instead of ironing towels (except guest towels), tea towels, sheets, underwear, overalls, and the like, she folds them away. She doesn't always sprinkle and iron the work shirts but presses them dry. She also tries to buy clothing and linens which are easy to iron, both as to materials and design.

Mrs. Cass County feels that one of her biggest time and energy savers is having her magazines shelved and classified. She has an upstairs storeroom where she has placed four shelves 4 feet long. As soon as the family finish reading a magazine, it is, as she terms it, "shelved." She has simplified dishwashing by putting the dishes to soak as soon as they are emptied. Then, after washing them, she scalds them and leaves them to dry in a draining rack.

The practices mentioned above release more time for sewing, visiting, reading, and studying seed catalogs. Mrs. Cass County likes gardening and especially her rose garden. To Mrs. Cass County, mending and sewing are just as much work as meal preparation, consequently they are daytime jobs. She tries to do the mending before putting the clothes away after laundering, and occasionally before they are worn through. This winter she mended many garments which she had thought were past using any more. She makes all their work clothes and makes over clothes for the boy. The evenings are saved for reading, radio, and relaxation in general.

During the busy seasons Mrs. Cass County finds that she can let her dusting go (doing it only once a week). When they get up in the morning she throws the bed covers back over the footboard. Then if she goes upstairs when the boy takes his nap she makes the bed; otherwise it goes unmade. Leaving the evening dishes (doing them with the breakfast dishes) and washing only once in 2 weeks make up the tasks which she feels can be left undone.

Mrs. Cass County contributes her most successful short cut to meal planning and preparation. She likes to plan and market ahead for a week. She has followed the practice of buying in quantity. She feels it is important to have well-planned and



balanced meals that can be prepared simply and easily. One-dish meals are her specialty in solving this problem. Items are put on the market list before the supply is quite exhausted. Mrs. Cass County feels she has worked out many successful short cuts in choring and prefers doing them because of the time she can save compared to the time it takes her husband.

Additional farm work assumed (since Pearl Harbor) includes helping with milking, watering the stock, helping grind stock feed half a day a week, feeding fodder and alfalfa to the cattle, and she fed corn and oats to the hogs until they got some self-feeders made. She also relieves her husband in driving the tractor when disking and harrowing.

The changes made to combine both house work and farm work include: hurrying more, neglecting straightening up the house (surface clutter), going out less, having dropped all organizations but home demonstration club and church, and neglecting correspondence.

Her biggest problem in helping has been the boy. Sometimes she leaves him alone in his play pen in the house; other times she puts him in the wagon with some playthings; then again he <sup>care of</sup> trudges along after her or she carries him. She feels that the difficulty of taking him is not only a constant worry for her but it is also hard on him, and so far they have not been able to work out a satisfactory solution to the problem. Help, even a dependable teen-age girl, is hard to find.

Mrs. Cass County is handicapped by lack of convenient work centers and cupboard space in her kitchen, and has no water except what is carried in. Since rationing she has done less baking than usual because of scarcity of sirup and the need for doing additional outside work. She feels that having less sugar has been a detriment to her husband in that he doesn't seem to have his usual energy and he buys 10 times as much candy as ever before. The Casses has a big garden last year and canned more fruit and vegetables than formerly and also put some berries in the freezer locker.

Care of equipment and furnishings seems to be a problem. She tries to do her own varnishing, papering, and house cleaning during the winter months when farm work is not so heavy. She doesn't care for this part of the housework, so she does it as fast as she can. Unless the yard gets ahead of her she keeps it, but occasionally Mr. Cass County has to use the mower.

Mrs. Cass County mentioned three ways by which she could improve her own management. First, do less puttering. When she was at home there were three of them, so they managed to get and keep the work done without too much effort on anyone's part. Second, put things away better. Her magazine practice hasn't carried over to articles of clothing, handwork, and what not that make for clutter and untidiness. The third problem is that of leaving things on the stairway, which would lead me to believe she doesn't profit by her mistakes.

Mrs. Cass County keeps both a home and farm account record and does some budgeting, but as to written plans and schedules, I don't believe she has seen where these might help. She feels that the helps she has received through home demonstration work are invaluable. Much of the ease with which she can plan and prepare meals she attributes to the experience gained when doing housework for a Lincoln family where the homemaker allowed her much of this responsibility.

Contributed by Jessie Baldwin,  
County Home Demonstration Agent

Weeping Water

Cass County, Nebraska.